

## **Mission accomplished! Success of the Caucasian Challenge 2008 paves way for a bigger 2009 event**

*By Attila Berenyi*

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*Traveling through 11 countries, former and current conflict zones and every possible type of terrain The Caucasian Challenge is a legendary entry into the popular motorsports travel phenomenon. Adrenalin-fueled teams now signing up for the 2009 event*

Budapest, Hungary. On the 30th of August, 32 enthusiastic amateur adventurers forming 15 teams set forth from Budapest, Hungary on an adventure of a lifetime. 16 days and 7,800 kilometers (4,800 miles) later, a huge crowd of onlookers and press watched and cheered as the the exhausted travelers crossed the finish line in Yerevan, Armenia.

This incredible journey brought the participants far off the beaten track as they explored seldom-seen parts of the world in this unique event. Participants were driving everything from modern Toyota Land Cruisers to 22 year old Soviet Moskvitches. Few vehicles made it through the rally unscathed, but nothing that couldn't be fixed. In the spirit of the challenge, the teams let nothing slow them down; all participants are pioneers in the truest sense of the word.

The Caucasian Challenge is a minimal-assistance motor rally. There are no support vehicles with mechanics or doctors to help sort out problems. Participants must rely on their own endurance, ingenuity, and luck to find their way to the finish line. There is a rough route to follow, along with a goal for every day of the rally, but the teams are on their own as they pick their own way across the land. Teams in the competition category must follow the official rally route and solve difficult geo-caching challenges every day to collect points.

The route brought the teams from the starting line in Budapest across Hungary, then through Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Albania, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Georgia, finally ending in Armenia. The teams get to travel through places that are rarely visited by tourists, such as Turkish Kurdistan or the war-torn Karabakh region. The roads range from 8-lane highways to rough muddy terrain or rocky mountain trails. Things don't always go as planned – cars break down, maps deceive, and border guards deny entrance.

Just weeks before this year's Caucasian Challenge, a conflict grew between Georgia and Russia and though the planned route was to take teams through the heart of the conflict, no teams canceled. Fortunately, the war ended just before the start of the challenge, and participants had a chance to get a first hand opinion about the situation.

The event is run by Chennai Event Management Services (CEMS), the pioneers of the infamous Rickshaw Challenges in India. Rallies organized by CEMS focus on adventure and discovery, and work to promote good relations with the locals, who invariably appreciate the fact that the route of this great race passed through their homelands.

Teams are already registering for next year's Caucasian Challenge taking place from August 28 till September 13, 2009. A few changes will be made to the route, which will favour tougher competition in more remote and mountainous areas of the Caucasus region than the previous rally. The success of this year's rally has stirred interest across the globe and organizers expect at least 50 teams participate in 2009.

The Caucasian Challenge, "the Last Great Adventure Race" is an epic 2 week motor rally through every type of terrain across 11 countries of the Caucasus. For more information on registering as a participant or

advertising as a sponsor, please contact [info@caucasianchallenge.com](mailto:info@caucasianchallenge.com)

[www.caucasianchallenge.com](http://www.caucasianchallenge.com) is a Chennai Event Management Services event combining the most exciting trends in motor sports and adventure tourism. To learn more about other CEMS events please visit: [www.cems.in](http://www.cems.in).

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